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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 002206

SIPDIS

FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11-29-12

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: LTTE leader Prabhakaran's annual hero's day speech was a mixed bag of positive and negative comments

Ref: Colombo 2195

(U) Classified by Lewis Amselem, DCM. Reasons 1.5  
(b,d).

**¶1.** (C) On November 27 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran made his annual "Hero's Day" speech. The government of Sri Lanka has commented favorably on the speech, highlighting Prabhakaran's acceptance of regional autonomy instead of a separate state. Prabhakaran's willingness to commit to a goal less than independent Eelam on the day commemorating the "heroes" that have died trying to establish Eelam is a significant positive sign. The address was not entirely positive, however. Prabhakaran indicated that if LTTE demands were not met, it would have no choice but to secede from Sri Lanka. He also noted that the Tigers would go back to using violence if necessary. A copy of the text was faxed to SA/INS.

**¶2.** (U) Some of the positive aspects of the speech included the following statements:

-- We are prepared to consider favorably a political framework that offers substantial regional autonomy and self-government in our homeland on the basis of our right to internal self-determination.

-- If a reasonable settlement to the Tamil national question could be realized by peaceful means we will make every endeavor, with honesty and sincerity to pursue that path.

-- The present government has been taking concrete actions redressing the urgent and immediate problems of our people.

**¶3.** (U) Some of the negative aspects of the speech included the following statements:

-- If our demand for regional self-rule is rejected we have no alternative other than to secede and form an independent state.

-- If the Sinhala chauvinistic forces, for their own petty political reasons scuttle this peace effort ... the Tamil people will be compelled to pursue the path of secession and political independence.

-- The military occupation is suffocating the civilian masses and causing tensions. Jaffna, which is the cultural heartland of the Tamil people, has turned into an open prison.

**¶4.** (SBU) Mission plans on using the following "if asked" press guidance:

Begin text:

The United States has carefully reviewed the annual address delivered on November 27 by Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

We are encouraged by Mr. Prabhakaran's assertion that regional autonomy -- and not separatism -- is the goal of the LTTE. We also welcome the expressions of support for the peace process and for Norway's facilitation effort.

Regrettably, Mr. Prabhakaran ignored the opportunity of this annual message to renounce violence, warning rather, that the LTTE would return to terrorism -- and to its original objective of an Eelam -- if it is unable to achieve its aspirations through dialogue. We emphasize once again that the international community is awaiting the LTTE's renunciation of violence.

As our Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said in Oslo, we urge the LTTE to make a "public renunciation of terrorism and of violence - to make it clear to the people of Sri Lanka and indeed to the international community -- that the LTTE has abandoned its armed

struggle for a separate state; and instead accepts the sovereignty of a Sri Lankan government that respects and protects the rights of all its people."

End text.

Wills